


GUEST COLUMN

Why is content marketing a must for brands?

Chandan Bagwe, Founder and Managing Director, C Com Digital, writes that the true potential and outreach of content marketing have come to fore with the arrival of digital marketing tools and social media. There are numerous benefits provided by content marketing which have made it a channel that is used by at least 90% of the marketers today

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Popular



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In the contemporary world, the good old marketing channels are becoming increasingly ineffective. The advent of online has shifted the markets from the physical to the virtual world, leading to the emergence of 'Content Marketing.' This is a form of direct communication between the brands and their target audiences to highlight the utility and superiority of their products and services. It is not a recent phenomenon, as content marketing started with the advent of print advertising. However, its true potential and outreach has come to fore with the arrival of digital marketing tools and social media. There are numerous benefits provided by content marketing that have made it a channel used [by at least 90% of marketers today](#).

Multiple channels of customer engagement

The access to digital marketing tools has given the modern content marketer a vast range of options. Social media platforms, emails, websites, search ads, blogs, e-magazines, online news portals, online PR, newsletters, slide-shares, video sharing sites, etc., now necessitate the creation of ever-increasing volumes of marketing content. Before the advent of digital content marketing, the engagement between brands used to be typically one-sided and pre-sales stage. However, today, there are numerous channels such as electronic media, print, websites, emails, social media and search engines, etc., that engage the target audience at various touchpoints. For instance, a person might come to know of a digital product via email, take a physical look at it in a store, check reviews of that product on Google before finally buying it online from Amazon or Flipkart apps. Such a multi-channel approach not only provides a stronger brand recall but also access to customers to buy a product irrespective of their location.

Enhanced sales

The content marketing channels online create a more direct and meaningful communication channel between the brand and the potential customers. This leads to greater transparency, faster trust-building and greater sales conversions. As stated above, the multi-channel access provided by digital content marketing enables the brands to continuously engage their customers. According to Twitter, [about 66% of its users discovered a new business online](#) and [94%](#) of the users intend to purchase products from a brand that they follow.

Cost-effectiveness

Content marketing channels are usually much more affordable and offer a better ROI compared to conventional marketing methods. A typical billboard at prime locations such as popular shopping malls, outside high-footfall places like airports, bus and train stations or large corporate hubs, etc., are quite expensive and don't offer any clearly verifiable metrics such as customers engaged, sales generated and the overall ROI. On the other hand, with digital content marketing, you can see well-defined metrics on parameters such as reach, engagement and conversions that give a precise understanding of how things stand for the brand. They are highly cost-effective and beneficial, especially for small- or medium-scale enterprises with limited marketing budgets.

Customer loyalty

The omnipresent and direct nature of content marketing in the age of social and digital marketing channels has been instrumental in fostering customer loyalty. Highly successful brands maintain a robust and real-time presence on major social media platforms and promptly respond to customers. This helps bring the disgruntled customers on board alongside fostering brand loyalty among the long-term customers of the brand. One of the biggest such success stories is 'Maggi.' After a spell of adverse market situations that saw Maggi noodles get banned for sale in India, the company (Nestle) turned the situation in its favour by harnessing the power of digital content marketing. During the time when the company worked through legal channels to get the ban lifted, it launched a sustained multi-platform campaign to dispel rumours and prove to customers that their product is not only safe but a highly preferred meal option. The emotional connect built by the campaign saw Maggi's sales rise meteorically.

Longer shelf-life

The shelf life of marketing content shared online has a much longer shelf life compared to an advertisement, billboard or TV advertisement. It also offers 24x7 visibility throughout its life. A blog or website content that you put online today is likely to remain there as long as you want. A user is likely to stumble upon it even 10 years later but it would be unlikely for a newspaper advertisement to attract any potential customer even two days after its publication.

It is due to these benefits that content marketing has been rapidly growing as a channel of preference globally. According to reports, the global content marketing industry is expected to grow by more than double to \$412.88 billion by 2021. There are over three billion social media users and 3.7 billion mobile internet users in the world at present. Such massive potential target audience presents immense opportunities for marketers. About 72% of content marketers have stated that it leads to better engagement and lead generation.

Importance of a content marketing strategy

There are an ever-increasing number of content marketing channels today. The availability of so many options can be harnessed effectively only with a proper content marketing strategy in place. Each channel offers different dynamics and ROI possibilities, hence it is essential for a business to identify its core audience and create compelling content to attract them. Towards this end, new technologies such as big data analytics, bots and machine learning, etc., are becoming integral to constantly improve the content marketing efforts of a brand.

In conclusion

Content marketing is set to be the most dominant form of brand promotion and customer engagement with the expansion of digital technology and it is bound to keep playing a key role in the tech-driven future of digital marketing for a long time to come. Hence, it is imperative for today's brands to build their content marketing strategies in consultation with a reputed content marketing agency that has a proven track record.

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